

## Honeylocust

*Gleditsia triacanthos* L.

This rapidly growing tree is also called locust, thorny locust, sweet locust, or thorn tree because of its sharp dense thorns two to five inches long. The tree is common throughout the state and is an invader of old fields. Farmers dislike the tree because its thorns easily ruin tractor tires. It is found on rich moist soils as well as dry upland fields, but usually as an individual or group of trees, and not as a major component of a forest. Thornless varieties are commonly planted in yards and along streets and parking lots.

The sapwood is creamy white to yellowish and the heartwood is light red to reddish brown. The bark is iron gray, brownish or black, fissured into long narrow scaly ridges. It is without characteristic odor or taste, and is heavy, hard, stiff and has a tendency to split. It works well with tools, but does not glue well and tends to be somewhat brittle. It is ring porous. When dry, it shrinks little and is durable when exposed to conditions favorable to decay.

Limited quantities of lumber are available and for the most part go into low-grade markets. Locust is an attractive wood for paneling and furniture. It is used for fence posts, railroad ties, pallets, blocking and fuelwood. When cut, the thorns create special problems. Its fruit, a pod with small seeds and a sweet pulp, is sought after by wildlife and cattle. Honeylocust is an average wood for workshop use. It is sometimes confused with Kentucky coffeetree.



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